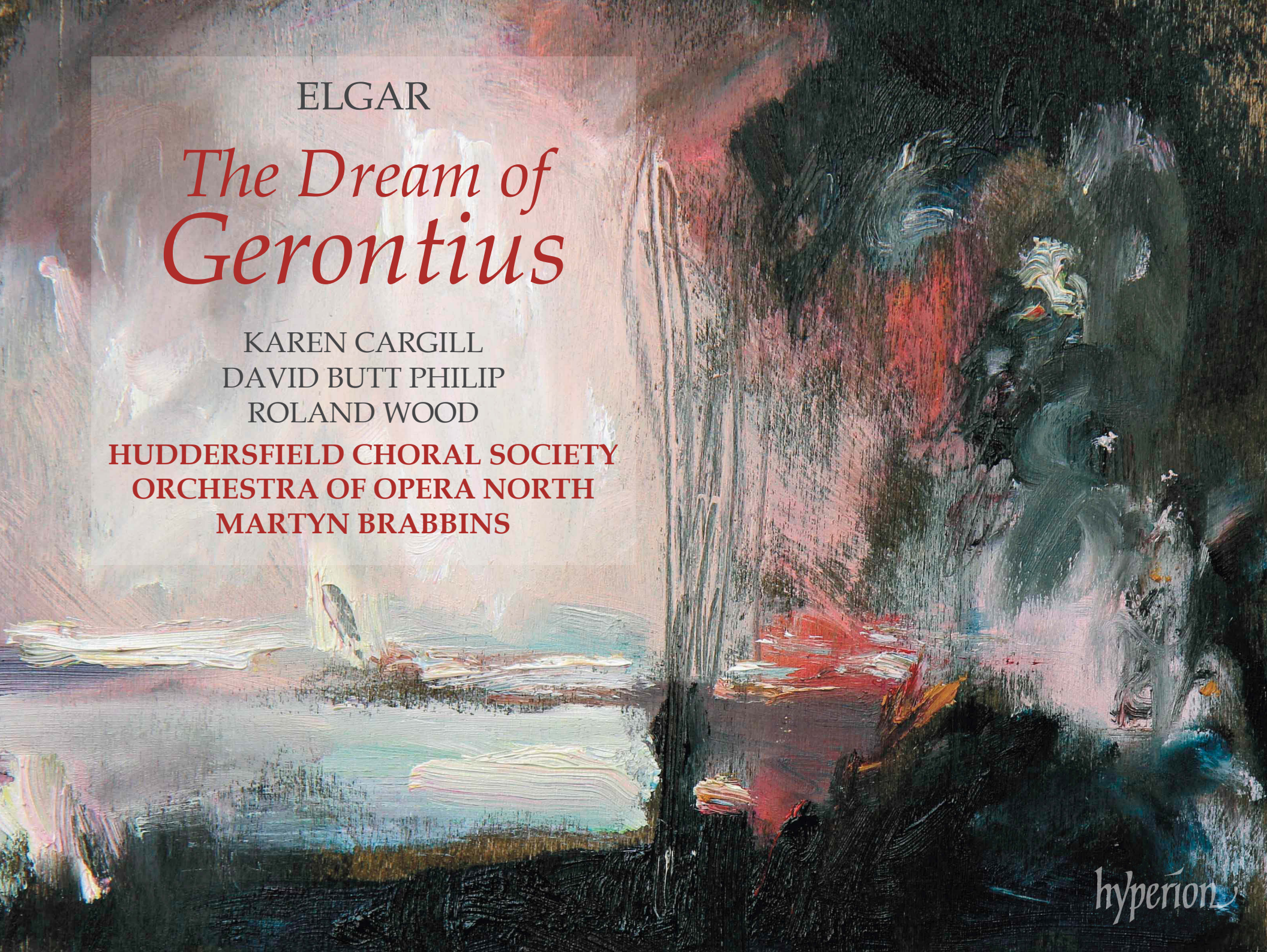
ELGAR
The Dream of Gerontius
KAREN CARGILL
DAVID BUTT PHILIP
ROLAND WOOD
HUDDERSFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY
ORCHESTRA OF OPERA NORTH
MARTYN BRABBINS
hyperion

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SIR EDWARD ELGAR

(1857–1934)

The Dream of Gerontius

Op 38

words by **Cardinal John Henry Newman** (1801–1890)

Gerontius **DAVID BUTT PHILIP** tenor

Angel **KAREN CARGILL** soprano

Priest & Angel of the Agony **ROLAND WOOD** baritone

HUDDERSFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY
ORCHESTRA OF OPERA NORTH

RNCM CHAMBER CHOIR

CD 1 2 3 6 7 & CD 2 8 12 14

MARTYN BRABBINS conductor

Part I COMPACT DISC 1 [35'49]

1 Prelude [9'38]

2 GERONTIUS Jesu, Maria—I am near to death … ASSISTANTS Kyrie eleison [3'55]

3 ASSISTANTS Holy Mary, pray for him [1'42]

4 GERONTIUS Rouse thee, my fainting soul … ASSISTANTS Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord [3'31]

5 GERONTIUS Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus [5'26]

6 GERONTIUS I can no more … ASSISTANTS Rescue him, O Lord [5'27]

7 PRIEST Proficiscere, anima Christiana … ASSISTANTS Go, in the name of Angels and Archangels [6'07]

Part II COMPACT DISC 2 [56'35]

1 Introduction [1'48]

2 SOUL OF GERONTIUS I went to sleep [4'15]

3 ANGEL My work is done [2'05]

4 SOUL OF GERONTIUS & ANGEL It is a member of that family [6'01]

5 SOUL OF GERONTIUS & ANGEL But hark! upon my sense [0'51]

6 DEMONS Low-born clods of brute earth … ANGEL It is the restless panting of their being [4'52]

7 SOUL OF GERONTIUS & ANGEL I see not those false spirits [2'12]

8 ANGEL, CHOIR OF ANGELICALS & SOUL OF GERONTIUS There was a mortal [5'30]

9 SOUL OF GERONTIUS But hark! a grand mysterious harmony … ANGEL And now the threshold [1'20]

10 CHOIR OF ANGELICALS Praise to the holiest [7'40]

11 ANGEL & SOUL OF GERONTIUS Thy judgement now is near [2'20]

12 ANGEL OF THE AGONY Jesu! by that shuddering dread … [5'05]
SOUL OF GERONTIUS I go before my Judge … VOICES ON EARTH Be merciful, be gracious

13 ANGEL Praise to his name! … SOUL OF GERONTIUS Take me away … [5'48]
SOULS IN PURGATORY Lord, Thou hast been our refuge

14 ANGEL Softly and gently … SOULS IN PURGATORY Lord, Thou hast been our refuge … [6'45]
CHOIR OF ANGELICALS Praise to the Holiest … Amen

I had a dream; yes—some one softly said
'He's gone'; and then a sigh went round the room.

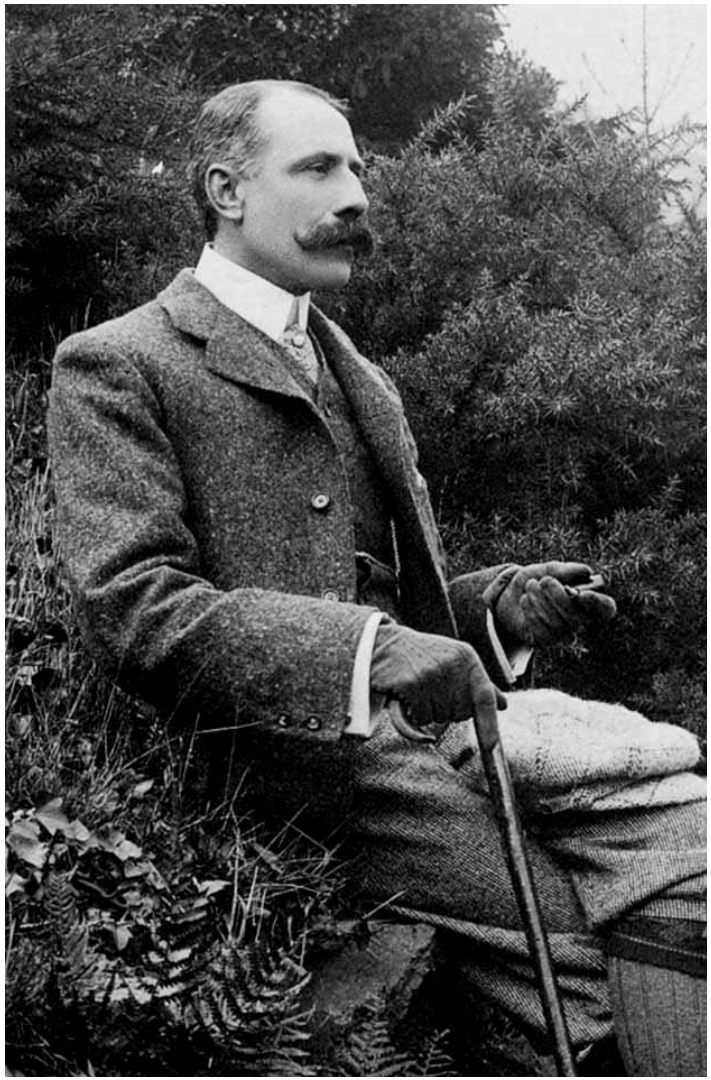
THESE LINES appear in the second of the seven 'Phases', as Cardinal St John Henry Newman (1801–1890) described the sections of his long poem *The Dream of Gerontius*. Along with much else, Elgar chose not to include them in his choral setting of the poem, yet they answer a rarely asked question: what, exactly, is Gerontius's dream?

Gerontius (sung by a tenor soloist) is an old man who lies on his deathbed, surrounded by his friends ('Assistants', sung by a small chorus) and accompanied by the Priest (a baritone soloist) who administers the last rites of the Roman Catholic church. Though he dies in the faith, Gerontius's final hours are beset by fear, doubt, physical agony and moments of lucidity: realities with which all of us can identify, believers or not. He affirms with all his remaining strength the fortitude of his faith, before collapsing with exhaustion and drifting into death. This is the substance of the first Phase of Newman's poem and Elgar set it to music in Part I of his work with very few cuts to the text.

The poem's six remaining Phases had to be drastically condensed to form Part II of Elgar's scheme. Here the Soul of Gerontius meets its Guardian Angel (a mezzo-soprano soloist) who accompanies it on its journey, past demonic souls crowding the entrance to the heavenly Judgement Court, past angelical souls singing a glorious hymn of praise, into the very presence of the almighty. Here, the Angel of the Agony (always taken by the same baritone soloist who sang the Priest) intercedes on behalf of Gerontius's soul, which so far has remained blind—a crucial detail in Newman's poem, which Elgar's setting surprisingly omits—and has therefore witnessed all that has passed up to this point through other senses. Earlier, on hearing heavenly music, the Soul 'cannot of that music rightly say / Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones', while, on passing the snarling demons, 'I see not those false spirits' can be understood both as a repudiation of them and as an emphasis of the Soul's sightless state.

'For one moment' the Soul is granted vision and, seared by the glance of God, begs the Guardian Angel to be taken away to purgatory to be cleansed and to await the new life. The Angel, accompanied by a Chorus of Souls and a distant Chorus of Angelicals, sings the Soul of Gerontius to sleep. Newman's text makes it clear throughout that it is the earthly suffering of Part I that was the 'dream' of the title; Elgar's setting is more ambiguous, the whole work unfolding in an atmosphere of such febrile mysticism that the boundaries between dreaming and waking, between life and death, seem blurred.

When Elgar composed his setting—which he categorically refused to call an oratorio or even a cantata—to a commission from the 1900 Birmingham Festival, such a scheme was astonishingly audacious. The English oratorio tradition was sturdily built on the retelling of biblical stories from an Anglican perspective and through a musical language that was audibly derived from those two honorary English composers Handel and Mendelssohn. Elgar's work jettisoned all that in favour of a Wagnerian music-drama indebted to *Tristan und Isolde* and, yet more potently, to *Parsifal*, weaving a complex network of leitmotifs, articulating a text saturated with Catholic theology and attempting nothing less than the direct representation of transcendental experience, all sustained at a terrifying pitch of subjective emotional intensity through a virtuoso orchestral technique hitherto unparalleled in English music. No wonder church authorities at the staunchly Anglican Three Choirs Festival baulked at early performances,



SIR EDWARD ELGAR

demanding substantial bowdlerization of the text; the first unexpurgated performance there was given at Gloucester in 1910 in the same concert as the premiere of Vaughan Williams's *Tallis Fantasia*.

At the time of the premiere, Elgar described *Gerontius* as having been 'soaking in my mind for at least eight years', but we can trace its profoundly Catholic sensibility back much further to the large quantity of sacred music that he had composed during his late teens and early twenties for St George's Roman Catholic Church in Worcester, where he, and before him his father William, played the organ. Neither William nor his wife Ann were Catholics, but in the early years of their marriage, Ann would come along to the Masses and she eventually converted five years before Edward's birth. Thus Elgar was brought up a Catholic. His father remained an Anglican until his deathbed conversion in 1906.

When Elgar married Caroline Alice Roberts in 1889, to the fury of her strongly Anglican family, the newlyweds were given a curious wedding gift: a copy of Cardinal Newman's poem, complete with copies of annotations made to the text by General Charles George Gordon, whose death in Khartoum in 1885 had sparked a nationwide obsession with the heroic military leader. The annotated copy of the poem had been found on his dead body and taken by many as evidence that Gordon was on the point of converting to Rome. The annotations circulated, and copies of *The Dream of Gerontius* became a popular wedding gift for Catholic couples, though Elgar already had his own copy long before he married. Around 1898, he even planned to write a General Gordon Symphony, but the project never came to fruition.

Elgar's music for *The Dream of Gerontius* was an achievement that had been painstakingly prepared throughout the preceding decade with a succession of choral and orchestral projects of increasing ambition and confidence, from the overture *Froissart* (1890) through the cantatas *The Black Knight* (1889–92) and *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* (1896), the oratorio *The Light of Life* (1896) and, most spectacularly, *Caractacus* (1897–98). Only the sheer magnitude of the achievement of *Gerontius* and the *Enigma Variations* (1899), and all that followed,

makes these earlier works seem preparatory, yet it is no exaggeration to say that if Elgar had died immediately after writing *Caractacus*, his achievements up to that point would still qualify him as the greatest British composer of the nineteenth century.

Expectations for the new work could therefore not have been higher—which made the debacle of the premiere in Birmingham Town Hall on 3 October 1900 all the more painful. When writing a large-scale work, Elgar customarily thrived on jeopardy. On this occasion, he took matters closer to the brink than usual: the chorus needed to start learning their music three months in advance, but by early 1900 Elgar had barely begun. He worked on the vocal score at speed, sending it off in batches to be printed and reaching the end by mid-June, before embarking on the mammoth task of orchestration, finishing the entire 300-page score on 3 August.

There had been an unexpected hold-up in the second half of June, when August Jaeger, Elgar's devoted editor at Novello publishers, suggested that he look again at the climactic moment where Gerontius's soul goes before God to be judged. Elgar's music originally avoided this moment entirely, moving directly from the Angel's final 'Alleluia' to the Chorus's 'Lord, thou hast been our refuge'. Jaeger found this unsatisfactory and spent two weeks arguing with, cajoling and bullying the recalcitrant composer to change it, before eventually finding the effective means of persuasion with the words: 'You are no Wagner!' Two days later, and with a comical lack of grace ('here's what I thought of at *first*'), Elgar sent the shattering orchestral climax, where the Soul finally meets its maker. Jaeger was right to hold out, but the pages needed reprinting and valuable preparation time had been lost.

The same month had also seen the sudden death of Charles Swinnerton Heap, the inspirational Chorus Master of the Birmingham Festival Chorus. His urgent replacement by his predecessor, the elderly and ailing William Stockley who was a man of conservative musical tastes, added a new layer of uncertainty to preparations, further compounded by the late arrival of orchestral parts and a lack of rehearsal time for such a difficult new score. The conductor Hans Richter, the man who had triumphed just over a year earlier with the premiere of the *Enigma Variations*, did his best to hold things together in the rehearsals and performance, despite having almost no opportunity beforehand to study the score, but the first performance of *Gerontius* was somewhere between a disappointment and a catastrophe, depending on which account one reads. For Elgar, it was undoubtedly the latter: 'I always said God was against art & I still believe it … I have allowed my heart to open once—it is now shut against every religious feeling & every soft, gentle impulse *for ever*.'

The critics felt differently though. While acknowledging and castigating the deficiencies of the performance, they almost universally saw beyond them to the heart of the piece. *The Musical Times* described it as 'a work of great originality, beauty and power; and, above all, of the completest sincerity', while the critic of the *London Musical Courier* 'left the hall throbbing with emotions that no English work has raised in me heretofore'.

Alarmed no doubt by accounts of the fraught premiere, choirs and orchestras initially took fright at performing the complete work and it wasn't until the end of 1901 that it was played again in full, this time with unequivocal success. Tellingly, this performance took place not in Britain, but in Germany, in Düsseldorf (a strongly Catholic city), and a second performance there six months later converted success into triumph. It was on that occasion that Richard Strauss famously and publicly declared 'Meister Edward Elgar' to be 'the first English progressivist', the ultimate endorsement from the living composer whom Elgar admired above all others. News of the success rapidly travelled home

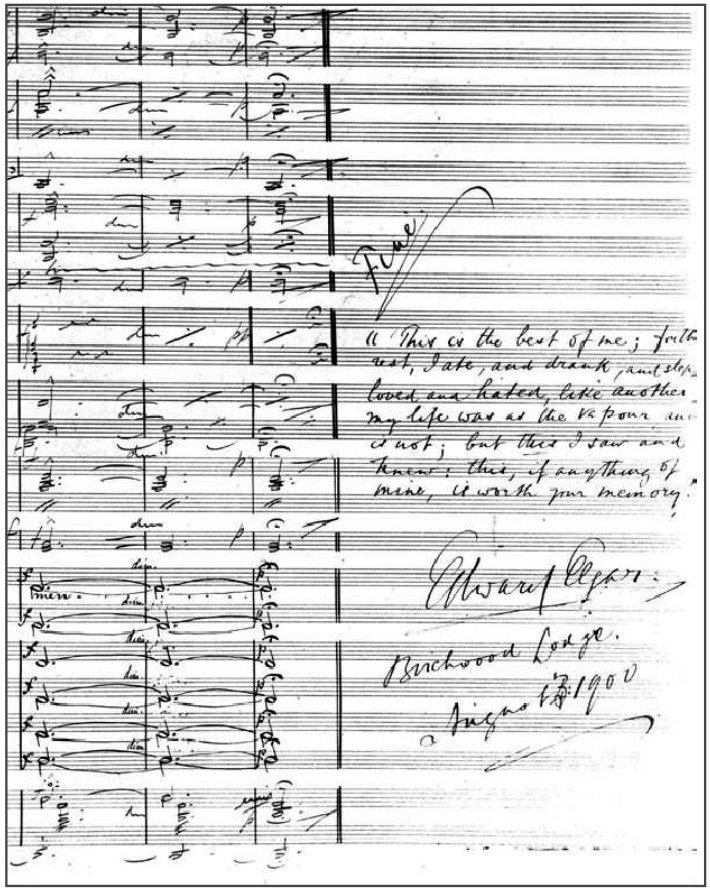
and abroad, and within months *Gerontius* was establishing itself, not just as a classic, but as a supreme masterpiece, the venerable American conductor Theodore Thomas describing it in October 1902 as 'the greatest [choral work] the last century has produced—I except none'.

Yet, even as the canonical status of *Gerontius* seemed confirmed and its musical mastery universally acclaimed, disquiet could still be heard in some quarters concerning the unwholesome nature of its religious impulses. Among the sceptics was the critic E A Baughan who in 1906 described *Gerontius*, a work that in many respects he thoroughly admired, as 'almost grovelling in its anguish of remorse' and having 'a peculiar sentimentality that is characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church'. Baughan went on to decry 'the hysterical prostration of the confessional' which he detected in Elgar's music, preferring instead 'the human tenderness of Brahms in his Requiem' and 'the massive manliness of Handel'.

Here we reach the nub of the problem. Although not directly stated, the criticism ultimately revolves around gender and sex. The Roman ritualism of the Anglo-Catholic church, with its 'smells and bells' and all its mystical accoutrements, had been the subject of huge controversy in England during the second half of the nineteenth century, with 'effeminacy' considered to be one of its most dangerous effects. In setting Newman's poem in the first place, not only was Elgar dabbling with all that, but he was doing so in an unashamedly Wagnerian manner. Wagner was still a highly divisive figure, his music frequently castigated for its sensuality, its eroticism and, according to some critics, its effeminacy. As if that wasn't enough, Elgar poured fuel on the fire by giving the part of the Angel, who is repeatedly identified in the poem as male, to a female singer and giving her/him and the Soul of Gerontius a rapturous love duet.

Had Elgar consciously wished to provoke the British musical establishment he could not have gone about it more thoroughly. But that was not his purpose. Elgar wrote *Gerontius* from conviction—'from my insidest inside', as he put it—and with a view to posterity. In doing so, he created an imperishable masterpiece, a work that, to quote Jaeger, speaks with 'the trumpet tongue of genius'. As he signed his name on the final page of the manuscript, Elgar appended a quote from John Ruskin:

> This is the best of me: for the rest I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another: my life was as the vapour and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.

JOHN PICKARD © 2026

HUDDERSFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY *affectionately known as 'The Choral'* and the FIRST WORLD WAR

WHEN 'THE CHORAL' HELD ITS AGM on 1 May 1914 there may have been little perception of what was to follow in the ensuing months, and the impact it would have locally, nationally and globally. With great aplomb and expectation, the Society announced its subscriber programme for the coming season: Verdi's *Requiem* on 6 November; Handel's *Messiah* on 18 December; and Handel's *Israel in Egypt* on 5 March 1915. The highlight was undoubtedly to be the first performance by The Choral of Verdi's *Requiem* 'on a Festival Scale', with the committee warning that the cost of producing new works, as well as maintaining the efficiency of the Society, 'results in a balance against the Treasurer'. It trusted 'the excellence of this programme will so appeal to all our Subscribers and musical friends as to ensure even larger and—if possible—more enthusiastic audiences than on any previous occasion.'

Just over three months later, the United Kingdom and the British Empire entered the First World War.

More or less immediately, some of The Choral's men enlisted. First to attest was 2nd Bass Frank Rushfirth from Lockwood, aged 32, a tailor employed by Messrs Denton and Lee, wholesale clothiers on Dundas Street, Huddersfield. He was a well-known and very promising bass singer, a member of several choirs, including The Choral. We can imagine his voice being very resonant as his service records note his height as 5ft 8in with an expanded chest measurement of 43in. Like many Huddersfield men, he enlisted into the 1/5 Battalion Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment (Huddersfield Territorials).

Following him into doing their duty for king and country were 2nd Bass Lewis Walker of Armitage Bridge (aged 22), an electrical engineer at David Brown & Sons of Lockwood, and 2nd Tenor Benjamin Barrowclough of Birkby (33), a clerk at the borough council offices at the town hall in Ramsden Street.

Other men started to enlist: choir members of long standing, such as minister's son 1st Bass Edward Allcock (22) into the Royal Artillery; and men who'd only joined the previous year, 1st Bass William Hodsman Richardson, a butcher aged 27, and 2nd Bass Harry Taylor, soon followed the call-up.

And, of course, there were fewer men coming forward for audition. Those who did, perhaps thinking 'it would all be over by Christmas', eventually too showed signs of leaving: Alto Frank Harry Cecil Solman, who moved from Lowestoft to start a new job in the town clerk's department in Huddersfield in 1914; 1st Tenor Herbert Law; 2nd Tenor George Rhodes Jnr; and 1st Basses A Harry Buckley and George Swift Buckley, millworker (the two appear to be unrelated).

So, with all this uncertainty about what the war would bring, it's little wonder that plans changed. On Saturday 26 September 1914, the *Yorkshire Evening News* carried the announcement that The Choral had abandoned its plans for the coming season, and would just perform *Messiah* at Christmas, with all proceeds going to the Relief Fund. Other societies changed their plans too. The Choral's reasoning for postponing Verdi's *Requiem* was the fear that its first-ever performance of the work would not meet the Society's exacting standards with so many men missing from the choir. Perhaps things weren't as bad as was feared. Halifax Choral Society went ahead with its performance of the work in November, but it wasn't as new to them. In the event, The Choral reinstated its spring concert of *Israel in Egypt* and rescheduled the Verdi *Requiem* for the first concert of the following season (29 October 1915). The two concerts performed in the 1914/15 season realized a profit, helped

by the conductor, organist, accompanist and soloists all voluntarily agreeing reduced fees, and enabled The Choral to divide 50 guineas equally between Local Relief and Sick and Wounded Funds.

On 15 May 1915, just four weeks after The Choral's AGM, Lance Corporal Lewis Walker was killed, dying instantly when he was struck with shrapnel between the eyes, in the Battle of Aubers Ridge, a disastrous offensive that resulted in the loss of thousands. Three other Huddersfield men were also killed and at least six wounded—all from the same West Riding Regiment. Major G P Norton, wrote to Lewis's parents expressing his utmost sympathy for their loss:

> I want you to know that he was a fine soldier; he was picked from a large number of available men to be a lance corporal, and has been a splendid help all through. A lad of fine character and splendid physique, his loss touches us all. He answered the call of his country, and has died in order that England may live. His grave is not far behind the trenches, marked with a neat white cross, and his comrades placed a wreath of wild flowers on his grave.

He was 23.

Lance Corporal Lewis Walker's grandfather visiting Lewis's grave at Rue-David Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix, France (Grave number I. B. 20.)

It's not difficult to imagine how the terrible news might have been received by The Choral members. Described in the *Huddersfield Examiner* as 'a baritone soloist of great promise, over 6ft tall with a fine presence who was held in high esteem', his loss must have brought home to them 'the stern and stubborn nature of the great struggle in which the country is taking part'.

Ticket sales for the 1915 Verdi *Requiem* were good and The Choral gave 'a most impressive musical performance worthy of so great a work'; clearly, it was worth the wait. The reviewer noted that even though it was evident that all the eligible men had gone to war, The Choral had lost none of its famous volume and richness of tone.

But more bad news was to come: Private Frank Rushfirth, well-known bass vocalist, was killed in action on 19 November. Frank was a stretcher bearer attached to 'A' Company of the 1/5 Battalion West Riding Regiment. Often pacifists, stretcher bearers were undoubtedly brave men who had to dash onto the battlefields to collect wounded comrades. In a letter to his aunt, with whom he lived, Frank was described as 'a fine comrade, one who always did what was asked of him without grumbling, and was always one of the first out whenever stretcher bearers were called for'.

The loss of two friends didn't deter other choir members from enlisting. By 1916, 2nd Basses William Ellis & Thomas Frederic Arnold, yarn salesman, 1st Bass Percy Johnson, cloth finisher, 1st Tenor Norman Holroyd, 2nd Tenor George Rhodes Jnr, Alto James Herbert Batley, wool warehouseman, and two band members, John Eagleton Jnr (son of the choir secretary) and F Walker, had all answered the call. Others enlisted later: 1st Basses, Thomas Eli Beaumont, a dyehouse bookkeeper, into the RAF; Herman Baxter, woollen weaver at John Crowther's, Milnsbridge; and George Illingworth, pork butcher. Even The Choral's organist, Mr E Cooper joined the ranks.

Returns on the three concerts were good in the 1915/16 season, but in The Choral's 1916/17 season, circumstances started to go against them. Perhaps the less-ambitious programme didn't inspire concert-goers to concert go. There were fewer subscribers, and restricted train services and poor street lighting discouraged other ticket buyers. Added to lower ticket sales was a government-imposed Entertainment Tax, a tax on bums on seats of an average of almost 15 per cent, payable from The Choral's ticket sales revenue. (It was to fund the war effort but like many taxes, it remained in place … till 1960!) The Choral made a loss of £39 11s 4d—the first in its history.

To cut costs or to be ambitious?

Considering this 'regrettable loss', the committee had two choices: an abbreviated programme or an ambitious one (committing The Choral to an outlay of £750–£800) to appeal to subscribers and the wider public. It chose the latter, announcing that the first programme of the season (2 November 1917) would be a Grand Elgar Night, and include performances of *The Dream of Gerontius*, *For the Fallen* and *To Women*. Not only that, the conductor would be Sir Edward Elgar himself. *Gerontius*, composed in 1900, had been performed twice by The Choral, in 1905 and 1907, and eighteen of The Choral's men had more recently been seconded to Leeds Choral Union to boost its war-impaired numbers in a six-night run of the same three works at London's Queen's Hall in May 1916, as a fundraiser arranged by Madame Clara Butt, the eminent contralto soloist. It's interesting to note that although Elgar conducted the main concerts in London, each night the rendering of Elgar's arrangement of the National Anthem was conducted by Dr Henry Coward, conductor of The Choral. Dr Coward was to be touched by war only eleven months later when his son, Lieutenant Henry Coward died from wounds received in action, on 20 April 1917, aged 37.

It's likely that the singing members were also excited at the prospect of revisiting *Gerontius*. Prior to its first performance by The Choral, *Colne Valley Guardian* had reported on rehearsals for the 1905/6 season:

> The programme includes one of the greatest of modern works, namely Sir Edward Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, which will be given in Huddersfield for the first time. The work has already claimed the members of the chorus as ardent admirers, and having sat at the feet of their talented teacher, Dr Coward, they are well able to judge of the merits or faults of a new work. Such expressions as 'I like it better every week,' are very common amongst the members. Without at present going into detail, it will be sufficient if we say that the abandoned howling of the demons as represented in the work will prove a revelation of choral accomplishment.

Two of the soloists in the 1917 concert were the same as had performed in the Clara Butt-inspired six-night run: Gervase Elwes and Robert Charlesworth, but the part of the Angel went to 21-year-old mezzo-soprano Miss Olga Haley, granddaughter of the late Mr Joshua Marshall, The Choral's principal conductor from 1874 to 1885.

The concert was a great success. Elgar later wrote to express his thanks to the choir for its wonderful singing, saying the performance ranked among the best he had ever heard and that he was glad to have had such a pleasant opportunity to become acquainted with the splendid society of which he had heard so much well-deserved praise.

The financial returns were good too, and the committee was able to report in the AGM of 1918 that the season (including *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*) had realized a net profit (after paying £108 entertainment tax) of £178. Many thanks were due to the excellent work of the recently established Ladies' Committee. The proceeds went to various relief funds.

With the war coming to an end, the spring concert for 1919 was late in the planning, but featured Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* (*Lobgesang*), under the circumstances probably not sung in German as it was in Huddersfield Choral's recent appearance in the BBC Proms at Gateshead!

The men return

By early 1919, men who had served had started returning to rehearsals. Some survivors never returned. Frank Solman, who must have had high hopes when he moved to Huddersfield, married a girl from his home district of Fulham in 1916, while still serving as a soldier in the City of London Rifle Brigade. He is listed on the 1921 census as a secretary to a music society, but out of work otherwise. William Hodsman Richardson, a butcher in 1911, was given honourable discharge from the army and awarded the Silver War Badge. That he was working as a caretaker for the Ministry of Labour in 1921 suggests he was too badly wounded to return to his trade as a butcher. The impact of war had other, long-reaching, effects. Herman Baxter, who had been a well-known baritone, taking principal parts with the Huddersfield Amateur Light Opera Society in the 1920s, fell into financial difficulties in 1926 through short-time working due to downturns in trade in the textile industry. He became estranged from his wife and disabled son and sold his cello to pay for his bankruptcy costs. By 1937, it had all become too much. His job as a weaver had gone and he was working as a canvasser when he took his own life on 30 December at his home in Milnsbridge, aged 54. As the newspaper headlines declared, it was a 'Singer's Tragic End'.

With the war behind it, The Choral went from strength to strength. It had donated 300 guineas to good causes over the duration, but could now look ahead to more ambitious programming, with Bach's fiendish *Mass in B minor* the first concert for the 1919/20 season.

The Dream of Gerontius became firmly established in The Choral's repertoire with the Society making the first ever recording of the complete work in April 1945 with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Malcolm Sargent on HMV records. The second recording, ten years later, featured the same choir, orchestra and conductor. This latest recording of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* by Huddersfield Choral Society was made almost eighty years to the day since that first recording, and once more in Huddersfield Town Hall.

GAYNOR HALIDAY © 2026

Lieutenant Henry Coward's grave, Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France (Grave number VIII. J. 12.)

PART I

1 Prelude

GERONTIUS

2 JESU, MARIA—I am near to death,
And Thou, Thou art calling me; I know it now.
Not by the token of this faltering breath,
This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow,
(Jesu, have mercy! Mary, pray for me!)
'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)
That I am going, that I am no more.
'Tis this strange innermost abandonment,
(Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee,)
This emptying out of each constituent
And natural force, by which I come to be.
Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant
Is knocking his dire summons at my door,
The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,
Has never, never come to me before;
So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength to pray.

ASSISTANTS

Kyrie eleison. *Lord have mercy.*

ASSISTANTS

3 Holy Mary, pray for him.
All holy Angels, pray for him.
Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.
All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him.
All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.
All holy Innocents, pray for him.
All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,
All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins,
All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

Kyrie eleison.

GERONTIUS

4 Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man;
And through such waning span
Of life and thought as still has to be trod,
Prepare to meet thy God.
And while the storm of that bewilderment
Is for a season spent,
And, ere afresh the ruin on me fall,
Use well the interval.

ASSISTANTS

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.
From the sins that are past;
From Thy frown and Thine ire;
From the perils of dying;
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God, or relying
On self, at the last; Lord, deliver him.

From the nethermost fire;
From all that is evil;
From power of the devil;
Thy servant deliver,
For once and for ever.

By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross,
Rescue him from endless loss;
By Thy death and burial,
By Thy rising from the tomb,
By Thy mounting up above,
By the Spirit's gracious love,
Save him in the day of doom.

Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.
From the sins that are past;
From Thy frown and Thine ire; Lord, deliver him.
From all that is evil; Thy servant deliver,
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God; Lord, deliver him.
From the perils of dying; Lord, deliver him.
For once and for ever.

Lord, Thy Servant deliver.

5 Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.

Firmly I believe and truly
God is three, and God is One;
And I next acknowledge duly
Manhood taken by the Son.

And I trust and hope most fully
In that Manhood crucified;
And each thought and deed unruly
Do to death, as He has died.

Simply to His grace and wholly
Light and life and strength belong,
And I love, supremely, solely,
Him the holy, Him the strong.

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.

And I hold in veneration,
For the love of Him alone,
Holy Church, as His creation,
And her teachings, as His own.

And I take with joy whatever
Now besets me, pain or fear,
And with a strong will I sever
All the ties which bind me here.

Adoration aye be given,
With and through the angelic host,
To the God of earth and heaven,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Mortis in discrimine.

Holy mighty, Holy God,
from the depths I pray to you,
have mercy, my Judge,
spare me, Lord,
at the moment of death.

GERONTIUS

6 I can no more; for now it comes again,
That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,
That masterful negation and collapse
Of all that makes me man.

And, crueller still,
A fierce and restless fright begins to fill
The mansion of my soul. And, worse and worse,
Some bodily form of ill
Floats on the wind, with many a loathsome curse,
Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs, and flaps
Its hideous wings,
And makes me wild with horror and dismay.
O Jesu, help! pray for me, Mary, pray!
Some Angel, Jesu! such as came to Thee
In Thine own agony …

Mary, pray for me.
Joseph, pray for me.

ASSISTANTS

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour,
As of old so many by Thy gracious power:—
Noe from the waters in a saving home; Amen.
Job from all his multiform and fell distress; Amen.
Moses from the land of bondage and despair; Amen.
David from Golia and the wrath of Saul; Amen.
—so, to show Thy power,
GERONTIUS Mary, pray for me.
ASSISTANTS Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

GERONTIUS

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep,
The pain has wearied me … Into Thy hands,
O Lord, Lord, into Thy hands …

The final hour is here.

PRIEST

7 Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo!
Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!
Go from this world! Go, in the Name of God
The Omnipotent Father, who created thee!
Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Son of the living God, who bled for thee!
Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit, who
Hath been poured out on thee!

Go forth, Christian soul, from this world!

ASSISTANTS

Go, in the name
Of Angels and Archangels; in the name
Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name
Of Princedoms and of Powers; and in the name
Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth!
Go forth in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets;
And of Apostles and Evangelists,
Of Martyrs and Confessors; in the name
Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the name
Of Holy Virgins; and all Saints of God,
Both men and women, go!

PRIEST Go forth upon thy journey,
Go from this world!
Go, in the Name of God.

ASSISTANTS Go, in the Name of God,
In the Name of Jesus Christ,
In the Name of the Holy Spirit.

PRIEST The Omnipotent Father, who created thee!
In the Name of Jesus Christ,
In the Name of the Holy Spirit, who
Hath been poured out on thee!

ASSISTANTS Go on thy course;
And may thy place today be found in peace,
And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount
Of Sion:

ASSISTANTS

Go on thy course;
And may thy place today be found in peace,
And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount
Of Sion:—through the Same, through Christ, our Lord.

PART II

1 Introduction

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

2 I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed.
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.

This silence pours a solitariness
Into the very essence of my soul;
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,
Hath something too of sternness and of pain.

Another marvel: someone has me fast
Within his ample palm; a uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones.
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

ANGEL

3 My work is done,
My task is o'er,
And so I come,
Taking it home,
For the crown is won,
Alleluia,
For evermore.
My Father gave
In charge to me
This child of earth
E'en from its birth,
To serve and save,
Alleluia,
And saved is he.

This child of clay
To me was given,
To rear and train
By sorrow and pain
In the narrow way,
Alleluia,
From earth to heaven.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

4 It is a member of that family
Of wondrous beings, who, ere the worlds were made,
Millions of ages back, have stood around
The throne of God.
I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord,
My Guardian Spirit, all hail!

ANGEL

All hail,
My child and brother, hail! what would'st thou?

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

I would have nothing but to speak with thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee
Conscious communion; though I fain would know
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,
And not a curiousness.

ANGEL

You cannot now
Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

Then I will speak. I ever had believed
That on the moment when the struggling soul
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its God,
There to be judged and sent to its own place.
What lets me now from going to my Lord?

ANGEL

Thou art not let; but with extremest speed
Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear at meeting Him?
Along my earthly life, the thought of death
And judgement was to me most terrible.

ANGEL

It is because
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear.
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee the bitterness of death is passed.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgement is begun.

A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;
And at this balance of my destiny,
Now close upon me, I can forward look
With a serenest joy.

5 But hark! upon my sense
Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear
Could I be frighted.

ANGEL

We are now arrived
Close on the judgement-court; that sullen howl
Is from the demons who assemble there,
Hungry and wild, to claim their property,
And gather souls for hell. Hist to their cry.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

6 Low-born clods
Of brute earth
They aspire
To become gods,
By a new birth,
And an extra grace,
And a score of merits.
As if aught
Could stand in place
Of the high thought,
And the glance of fire
Of the great spirits,
The powers blest,
The lords by right,
The primal owners,
Of the proud dwelling
And realm of light,—
Dispossessed,
Aside thrust,
Chucked down
By the sheer might
Of a despot's will,
Of a tyrant's frown,
Who after expelling
Their hosts, gave,
Triumphant still,
And still unjust, gave
Each forfeit crown
To psalm-droners,
And canting groaners,
To every slave,
And pious cheat,
And crawling knave,
Who licked the dust
Under his feet.

ANGEL

It is the restless panting of their being;
Like beasts of prey, who, caged within their bars,
In a deep hideous purring have their life,
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

DEMONS

The mind bold
And independent,
The purpose free,
So we are told,
Must not think
To have the ascendant.
What's a saint?
One whose breath
Doth the air taint
Before his death; Ha! ha!

A bundle of bones,
Which fools adore,
When life is o'er. Ha! ha!

Virtue and vice,
A knave's pretence,
'Tis all the same; Ha! ha!
Dread of hell-fire,
Of the venomous flame,
A coward's plea. Ha! ha!

Give him his price,
Saint though he be,
From shrewd good sense
He'll slave for hire;
And does but aspire
To the heaven above
With sordid aim,
And not from love. Ha! ha!

(Dispossessed,
Aside thrust.)

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

7 I see not those false spirits; shall I see
My dearest Master, when I reach His Throne?

ANGEL

Yes,—for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord.
One moment; but thou knowest not, my child,
What thou dost ask: that sight of the Most Fair
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

Thou speakest darkly, Angel; and an awe
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

ANGEL

8 There was a mortal, who is now above
In the mid glory: he, when near to die,
Was given communion with the Crucified,—
Such, that the Master's very wounds were stamped
Upon his flesh; and, from the agony
Which thrilled through body and soul in that embrace,
Learn that the flame of the Everlasting Love
Doth burn ere it transform …

CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

ANGEL

Hark to those sounds!
They come of tender beings angelical,
Least and most childlike of the sons of God.

CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

To us His elder race He gave
To battle and to win,
Without the chastisement of pain,
Without the soil of sin.

The younger son He willed to be
A marvel in His birth:
Spirit and flesh His parents were;
His home was heaven and earth.

The Eternal blessed His child, and armed,
And sent Him hence afar,
To serve as champion in the field
Of elemental war.

To be His Viceroy in the world
Of matter, and of sense;
Upon the frontier, towards the foe
A resolute defence.

Praise to the Holiest.

ANGEL

We now have passed the gate, and are within
The House of Judgement.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

The sound is like the rushing of the wind,
The summer wind among the lofty pines.

CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Glory to Him, who evermore
By truth and justice reigns;
Who tears the soul from out its case,
And burns away its stains!

ANGEL

They sing of thy approaching agony,
Which thou so eagerly didst question of.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear.

CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

9 But hark! a grand, mysterious harmony:
It floods me, like the deep and solemn sound
Of many waters.

ANGEL

And now the threshold, as we traverse it,
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.

CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

10 Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail;

And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's Presence and His very Self,
And Essence all-divine.

O generous love! that He who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo;

And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

Glory to Him, who evermore
By truth and justice reigns.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

ANGEL

11 Thy judgement now is near, for we are come
Into the veilèd presence of our God.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

ANGEL

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,
Who say the “Subvenite” with the priest.
Hither the echoes come; before the Throne
Stands the great Angel of the Agony,
The same who strengthened Him, what time He knelt
Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with blood.
That Angel best can plead with Him for all
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

ANGEL OF THE AGONY

12 Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled in Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee;
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee;
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come to Thee,
To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze on Thee.

Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

I go before my Judge …

VOICES ON EARTH

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.
Lord, be merciful; Lord, deliver him. Spare him, Lord.

ANGEL

13 Praise to His Name!
O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,
Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.
Alleluia. Praise to His Name!

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,
Told out for me.
There, motionless and happy in my pain,
Lone, not forlorn,—
There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,
Until the morn.
There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,
Which ne'er can cease
To throb, and pine, and languish, till possest
Of its Sole Peace.
There will I sing my absent Lord and Love:—
Take me away,
That sooner I may rise, and go above,
And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be.

SOULS IN PURGATORY

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in every generation;
Before the hills were born, and the world was: from age to age Thou art God.

ANGEL

14 Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.

SOULS IN PURGATORY

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in every generation.
Come back, O Lord! how long.

Angels, to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest;
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven,
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.

SOULS IN PURGATORY

Come back, O Lord! how long:
and be entreated for Thy servants.

CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise.
To His elder race He gave
To battle and to win,
Without the chastisement of pain,
Without the soil of sin.

ANGEL

Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.

SOULS IN PURGATORY

Bring us not, Lord, very low: for Thou hast said:
Come back again, ye sons of Adam.
Lord, come back, O Lord! how long:
and be entreated for Thy servants.

Amen.

CARDINAL JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801–1890)

DAVID BUTT PHILIP *Gerontius*

One of the most exciting tenors Britain has to offer today, David Butt Philip is quickly becoming a firm favourite on the major international stages.

An alumnus of the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme, his recent debuts have included the title role in Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Wiener Staatsoper; Florestan in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Prince in Dvořák's *Rusalka* at the Royal Ballet and Opera; Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Richard Strauss) at the Edinburgh International Festival and Bayerische Staatsoper and title roles of *Der Zwerg* (Zemlinsky) and *Lohengrin* at Deutsche Oper Berlin have earned him major critical and public acclaim.

Last season, Butt Philip made three appearances at Wiener Staatsoper: his role debut as Apollo in Richard Strauss's *Daphne*, a new production of *Lohengrin* and a return as Stolzing in the production he premiered the previous season. Other highlights included Don José in Bizet's *Carmen* and *Lohengrin* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Florestan (*Fidelio*) at the Bayerische Staatsoper and a role debut as Canio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* at Opera Holland Park. On the concert platform he performed Mahler's Symphony No 8 with Staatskapelle Dresden under the baton of Christian Thielemann and at the Bergen International Festival with Edward Gardner; and made his debut with the Berliner Philharmoniker with Dvořák's *Stabat mater* conducted by Jakub Hrůša.

Born and brought up in Wells in Somerset, Butt Philip was a chorister at Peterborough Cathedral. He is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music, and the National Opera Studio and was also a Samling Artist, an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and winner of the prestigious John Christie Award in 2011.

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KAREN CARGILL *Angel*

Described as having a voice that 'dazzles' with a 'treacle-rich middle register' and a 'full and rich top', Karen Cargill has firmly established herself as one of the leading singers of her generation with upcoming engagements at the Metropolitan Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Dutch National Opera, Canadian Opera Company and Norwegian National Opera. Equally established on the concert stage, Karen regularly appears with conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Daniel Harding, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Robin Ticciati, Rafael Payare and Edward Gardner.

Recent engagements have seen her return to the role of Brangäne in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* at Glyndebourne, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and with Sir Simon Rattle and the Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra. She also made her role debut as Brigitte in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* in concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons; returned to the Montreal Symphony Orchestra for Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* with Rafael Payare; the San Francisco Symphony for Verdi's *Requiem* with Esa-Pekka Salonen; the Toronto Symphony for Mozart's *Requiem* with Jukka-Pekka Saraste; and the San Diego Symphony for Mahler Symphony No 3 with Rafael Payare.

With her recital partner Simon Lepper Karen has performed at Wigmore Hall London; Concertgebouw Amsterdam; Kennedy Centre Washington and Carnegie Hall New York, and regularly gives recitals for BBC Radio 3. With Simon, Karen also recently recorded a critically acclaimed recital of Lieder by Alma and Gustav Mahler for Linn Records, for whom she has previously recorded Berlioz *Les nuits d'été* and *La mort de Cléopâtre* with Robin Ticciati and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Karen is Patron of the National Girls' Choir of Scotland and sang in the National Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication for King Charles III following his Coronation in 2023.

ROLAND WOOD *Priest & Angel of the Agony*

Roland Wood was born in Berkshire and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Patrick McGuigan and Robert Alderson, then at the National Opera Studio. He was the winner of the 1998 Webster Booth Prize and the 1999 Frederick Cox Award, and was also awarded Second Prize in the 2000 Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Awards.

Roland made his debut for Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2000 and has now sung major roles for all the major UK companies and overseas. Highlights include Ford (Verdi's *Falstaff*) and Roucher (Giordano's *Andrea Chenier*) for the Royal Opera; Count Almaviva (Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*), Paolo (Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*), Zurga (Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*), Bunyan/Pilgrim (Vaughan Williams's *The Pilgrim's Progress*) and Marcello (Puccini's *La bohème*) for English National Opera; Golaud (Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*), Scarpia (Puccini's *Tosca*), Count di Luna (Verdi's *Il Trovatore*), Escamillo (*Carmen*) and Robert Storch (Richard Strauss's *Intermezzo*) for Scottish Opera; Nick Shadow (Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*) for Glyndebourne Festival; Giorgio Germont (Verdi's *La Traviata*) Opera North; Renato (Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*) and Nottingham (Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux*) for Welsh National Opera; and Scarpia and Renato for Grange Park Opera.

Roland Wood has recorded extensively for both Chandos Records and Opera Rara and has also featured often on the concert platform, where highlights include Tippett's *Child of our time* with the Hallé, Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ* with the English Chamber Orchestra, Donizetti's *Il Diluvio Universale* with the London Philharmonic and Bernstein's *Candide* at the opening concert of the Edinburgh Festival.

MARTYN BRABBINS *Conductor*

Martyn Brabbins was recently appointed Chief Conductor of the Malmö Symphony Orchestra and of the Symphony Orchestra of India, taking up both roles in the 2025/26 season. He was Music Director of the English National Opera from 2016 to 2023.

An inspirational force in British music, Brabbins guest conducts top international orchestras such as the Royal Concertgebouw, San Francisco Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Philharmonia, BBC Symphony and most of the other leading UK orchestras. He is a popular figure at the BBC Proms, which in 2019 commissioned fourteen composers to write a birthday tribute to him. Known for his advocacy of British composers, he has conducted hundreds of premieres across the globe. He has recorded nearly 150 albums to date, including prize-winning recordings of operas by Korngold, Birtwistle and Harvey.

Brabbins has had a busy opera career since his early days at the Kirov, with more recent engagements at La Scala, the Bayerische Staatsoper, and regular performances in Lyon, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Antwerp.

He was Associate Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (1994–2005), Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic (2009–2015), Chief Conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic (2012–2016), and Artistic Director of the Cheltenham International Festival of Music (2005–2007). Brabbins holds the positions of Prince Consort Professor of Conducting at London's Royal College of Music, Visiting Professor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and Artistic Advisor to the Huddersfield Choral Society. For many years he has supported professional, student and amateur music-making at the highest level in the UK. In 2023 he received the RPS Conductor Award for his 'colossal' contribution to British musical life.

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Huddersfield Choral Society

SOPRANO Louise Alp, Naomi Arao, Margaret Atkinson, Lucy Bacon, Susan Baines, Jill Bamford, Gill Barham, Michelle Barnes, Lydia Bayliss, Christine Broadbent, Olivia Brock, Colleen Brown, Mary Cadwaladr, Sue Colven, Hazel Cook, Gwyneth Cooper, Eleanor Davies, Elise DeFusco, Sue Ellis, Laura Gaworska, Rosemary Hoggart, Gabriella Holt, Fiona Hoyle, Kate Hyland-Collier, Elizabeth Jenkins, Caroline Jones, Jennifer Jones, Elaine Lee, Catherine Litjens, Anne Lockwood, Suzanne Longley, Helen Martin, Lucy Pople, Carol Randerson, Lydia Robertshaw, Sally Robertshaw, Lindsey Rosser, Jane Sargent, Cathy Shaida, Kate Shepherd, Nan Steinitz, Debbie Stephens, Ruth Stones, Marilyn Sutcliffe, Fiona Timms, Debbie Trigg, Frances Turner, Sue Whiteley, Sarah Wickham, Sue Wilde, Joanna Williams, Rebecca Wright

ALTO Alice Barford, Megan Barford, Jean Barnwell, Thelma Bateman, Rachel Billington, Ruth Bostock, Angela Braviner, Rachael Brock, Rowena Burton, Audrey Chow, Ruth Cole, Mary Crothers, Karen Davis, Christine Durham, Lana Ferarri, Janet Gabanski, Gaynor Haliday, Richard Hallas, Sophie Hawley, Andrea Hindson, Sue Hornby, Tania Jacquier, Vanessa MacLeod, Lois Mavrodaris, Hilary McLean, Cath Murgatroyd, Audrey O'Hara, Ruth Robertson, Susan Sandford, Rosemary Shackleton, Catherine Shaw, Lyn Slater, Doreen Smurthwaite, Catherine Stephenson, Pavlína Švarcová-Jeffs, Susan Turnbull, Charlotte Tyzzer-Smith, Michelle Walker, Catherine Wren, Clare Wright

TENOR Reuben Apostol, Charles Brook, Jasper Brownrigg, Ben Drury, Frances Durning, Chris Fawcett, Jeremy Garside, Malcolm Hinchliffe, Timothy Lewis, David Lunn, Huw Mears, Philip Ratcliffe, Stuart Rudd, Gerald Savage, Colin Shires, David Simcock, Alan Stephens, Patrick Svarc-Jeffs, Jack Tait

BASS Robert Akers, Christopher Arnold, Mark Bamforth, Pete Carlile, Martyn Crossley, Connor DeFusco, Ian Ford, Oliver Gorton, John Harman, Geraint Johnes, Dale Johnson, Tim Jones, Christopher Kneale, Andrew Marsland, Mick Nagle, Chris O'Donnell, Angus Pogson, Peter Prasadam, Geoffrey Priestley, William Robertshaw, Howard Sandford, Graham Smelt, Jack Smith, Terry Smurthwaite, Jim Stafford, Tim Stephenson, Mark Taylor, Richard Thompson, Jeff Trigg, Matthew Walsh, Conrad Winterburn, Andrew Wright, Mitchell Wright

Orchestra of Opera North

FIRST VIOLIN Katie Stillman, Henry Chandler, Tamsin Symons, Claire Osborne, Brian Reilly, Anthony Banks, Catherine Landen, Susannah Simmons, Susan Voss, Louise Latham, Heloisa Ribeiro, Ian Flower

SECOND VIOLIN Oliver Bailey, Helen Greig, Alison Dixon, Jacqueline Cima, Rachael England, Maria Vericonte, Jessica Graham, Anna Downes, Michael Walton

VIOLA David Aspin, Anne Trygstad, Vince Parsonage, Raymond Lester, Ros Cabot, Matthew Kendall, Ben Kearsley

CELLO Hannah Roberts, Dan Bull, Lydia Dobson, Simon Denton, Deborah Chandler, Cormac Ó Briain

DOUBLE BASS Tom Berry, Claire Sadler, Mhairi Simpson, Imogen Fernando

FLUTE Luke O'Toole, Daniel Swani, Lucy Driver OBOE Richard Hewitt, David Benfield COR ANGLAIS Catherine Lowe

CLARINET Oliver Casanovas Nuevo, Andrew Mason BASS CLARINET George Blakesley

BASSOON Adam MacKenzie, Howard Dann CONTRABASSOON Sarah Nixon

HORN Alexander Hamilton, John Pratt, Emily Douglas, Sam Yates, Jonathan Harris

TRUMPET David Hooper, Daniel Venglar, Seb Williman TROMBONE Blair Sinclair, Tom Berry BASS TROMBONE Christian Jones TUBA Brian Kingsley

TIMPANI Mark Wagstaff PERCUSSION Michael Harper, Ben Gray, Harry Percy, Harriet Kwong HARP Celine Saout ORGAN Michael Bawtree

RNCM Chamber Choir

DIRECTOR Stuart Overington

SOPRANO Clementine Thompson, Katie Shepperdson, Rosalind Hardie, Madeleine Wickham-Brown, Rosa Sparks

ALTO Mollie Swain, Kamea Nemeth, Persie Bell, Heledd Richardson, Eibhlin Eddy

TENOR Jacob Parker, Nico Shaw, Isaac Bentley, Oliver Mollett, Oli Barber

BASS Alex Peart, Ben Finnie, Colin Wu, Alex Yehorychev, Edward Wenborn

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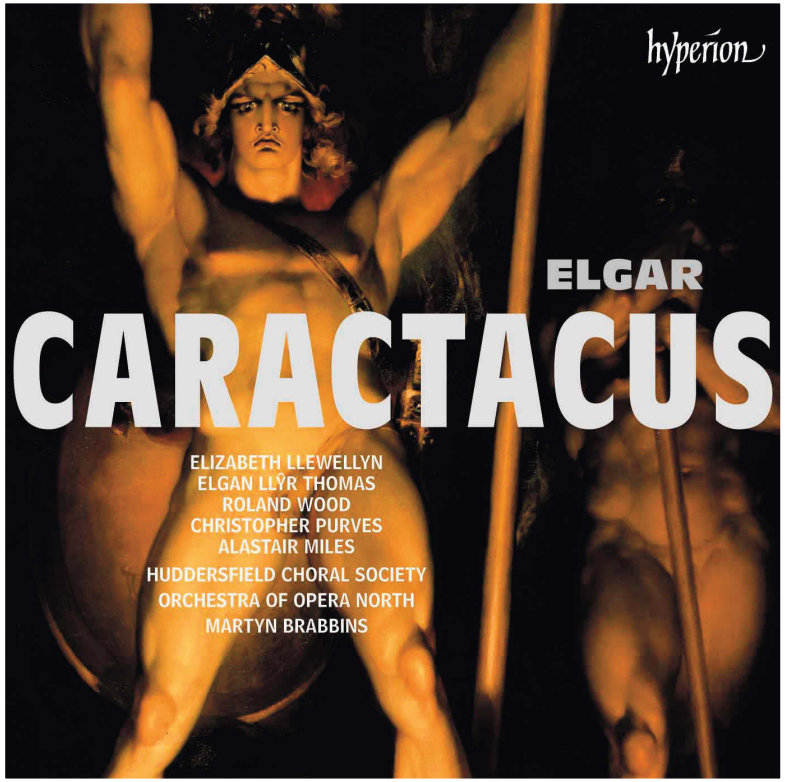

SIR EDWARD ELGAR (1857–1934)

CARACTACUS

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CHRISTOPHER PURVES, ALASTAIR MILES bass
HUDDERSFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY
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